

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in the above application.

The Office Action dated February 10, 2006, has been received and carefully reviewed. Each issue raised in that Office Action is addressed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. 112, FIRST PARAGRAPH

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, on the grounds that the limitation “for inserting” added to claim 1 by a previous amendment was not supported by the original specification. The phrase “for inserting” has been deleted by the above amendment. It is therefore submitted that claim 1 complies with 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph because the phrase “for inserting” was stated to render claim 1 unclear. This phrase has been removed by the above amendment.

The Office Action also seems to suggest that claim 1 might require a “fixed recess portion.” It is respectfully submitted that in the phrase “a fixed projecting portion and a recessed portion,” the word “fixed” modifies only the words “projecting portion.” The presence of the second indefinite article “a” precludes “fixed” from modifying “recessed portion.” If all other issues are resolved and the claims are otherwise in condition for allowance, Applicant will consider reversing the order in which these elements are recited to further show that “fixed” does not modify “recessed portion.” However, for the above reasons, it is submitted that claim 1 as amended complies with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Claim 1 requires, *inter alia*, one of a fixed projecting portion.... The Office Action acknowledges that ball 25 of Kamikawa is movable, but nonetheless seems to indicate that this movable ball satisfies the limitation of a fixed projection. It is respectfully submitted that the statement in the Office Action that

Kamikawa shows a movable projecting portion is inconsistent with the statement that ball 25 is fixed. Claim 1 does not require that an element be fixed in at least two directions; it requires that an element be fixed. If this rejection is maintained, it is respectfully requested that the examiner provide a definition of "fixed" that covers movable objects or otherwise shows how movable ball 25 can be considered to be "fixed."

The Office Action indicates that Applicant has not shown that ball 25 is not fixed. However, the Office Action acknowledges that ball 25 is movable. Ball 25 is shown in two different positions in Figures 4a and 4b of Kamikawa. Something that is movable is not "fixed." Since the ball 25 of Kamikawa is shown as being movable and the Office Action acknowledges that ball 25 is movable, it is not clear why Applicant must submit evidence to show that ball 25 of Kamikawa is movable.

The Office Action also indicates that Applicant has not limited the definition of "fixed" to preclude covering a movable ball 25. Applicant is relying on the ordinary meaning of "fixed," which means "stationary," and does not cover a movable ball such as ball 25 of Kamikawa. Ball 25 of Kamikawa is not fixed under any known definition of this term. It is therefore respectfully submitted that there is no need to "further refine" the definition of fixed since the ordinary meaning of this term makes the scope of the claimed invention clear.

In an effort to further define over Kamikawa, claim 1 has been amended to require that the projection be fixed "when the shaft is moved into the inside of the shaft coupling portion." Ball 25 of Kamikawa must move when the shaft is inserted into a yoke. As discussed in the specification, the claimed projecting portion makes it impossible to insert the shaft into the yoke unless the shaft is properly positioned in an axial direction with respect to the yoke because of the interference of the fixed projecting portion. For this reason as well, claim 1 is submitted to be allowable over the references of record.

CONCLUSION

Each issue raised in the Office Action dated February 10, 2006, has been addressed, and it is believed that claims 1-9 are in condition for allowance. Wherefore, reconsideration and allowance of claim 1, and rejoinder and allowance of claims 2-9, is earnestly solicited.

Application No. 10/695,742
Amendment dated May 10, 2006
After Final Office Action of February 10, 2006

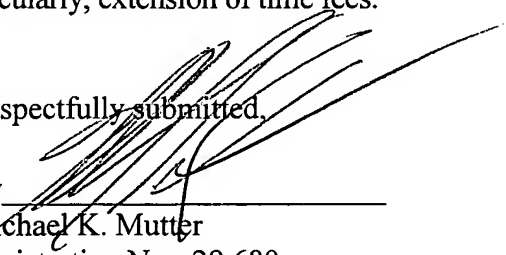
Docket No.: 1560-0400P

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Scott Wakeman (Reg. No. 37,750) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: May 10, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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